

Good afternoon Members of the Ways and Means Committee. I am here in support of House Bill 715 to place cameras in self-contained classrooms, with requests.

My son, Nathan is a sweet and kind student who is in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade currently enrolled at StrawBridge in Baltimore County. He is verbal but in his younger years was not able to tell us what was happening to him during the day when staff was abusing him because he was so young and he seemed to be afraid to talk about what was happening to him.

Nathan was in Frederick County Public Schools when he was abused by the special education staff who were supposed to be the ones protecting him and making sure he received the specialized instruction required by his IEP.

Nathan was subject to repeated restraints and seclusions which were illegally utilized for simple behavioral events such as throwing boxes of crayons, refusing to walk after countdown/wait time, clenching table after climbing under it, and disrupting class.

Nathan was so traumatized that he was then moved by his IEP team to a The Foundation School of Montgomery County at FCPS' expense. Unfortunately, in this private school the abuse again continued and staff continued to use restraint and seclusion even though they knew he had significant trauma from the previous overuse of restraint and seclusion. The last resort was an emergent hospital visit from obvious visual signs of abuse to his body and abuse by 2 staff members, seen by the bus assistant on his way out of the building for the day.

Some of the staff would tell me that his bouts of anger would come after he had been restrained or secluded and that he would then need to be restrained again to control this "incident". Much of the time leading to some sort of injury such as him hitting his head on the floor and wall several times, coming home with goose eggs, bruises and scratches.

We have had to get an attorney to help us navigate through this horrendous experience. We have had to have Nathan in a home instructional program and in private therapy because he was so traumatized by these experiences in FCPS special education and in the nonpublic school. Nathan continues to deal with the aftermath of that trauma and will be in counseling for many years to come.

If there had been cameras in the classroom, not only would we have been able to find out what was happening but we would have been able to share the incidents with the therapists and work with the school to help identify antecedents to help change the behaviors.

Due to risks to students and staff in special education classrooms, cameras can give us the information we need to know for what has occurred so that we can address it with therapists and so that staff can learn from the incident to plan for it to not occur again.

Please support House Bill 715. Thank you.

Crystal Spradlin